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SIGNAL

The publication
for Lisa™ and
Macintosh™ users.

#10

19 March 1984

Does Your DMP Need Speed?

One of our readers recently called to describe some problems he was having with his dot matrix printer (the original model, not the new Imagewriter). He mentioned that while diagnosing the problem, he had changed some of the DIP switch settings but forgot to write down the original switch positions before he changed them. A dealer later gave him a list of recommended switch settings, and we began comparing the list over the phone with a Semaphore printer known to have DIP switches that

have not been changed since the printer was shipped directly from Apple early last summer.

To our surprise, we discovered that switch 2-2 controls the size of the printer's input buffer, and that our printer did *not* have the switch at the recommended setting. (See Appendix C of the printer documentation for a list of switches and recommended settings, and see page 37 of the same manual for a description of how DIP switch 2-2 controls the size of the printer's input buffer.)

We quickly opened switch 2-2 to provide a full 3K print buffer, powered on the printer, and ran some quick tests. Immediately

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we found that short lines would print much faster than before. Our first test was to print a typical business letter. With the new switch setting, the total time to print dropped by about 36 percent!

Signal's Mac Arrives


Our Macintosh arrived late last month, and we dropped everything so we could spend the day with the machine simply playing around and exploring its capabilities. What follows is a compilation of some of our notes, first impressions, and other observations as we began using the machine for the first time:

... Good grief, those 3.5" disks sure look tiny, and now we have yet another form of magnetic medium to keep in the storage cabinet (along with our 8" disks, two styles of 5.25" disks, 0.5" reel-to-reel tape and .75" tape cartridges), but it's nice how the enclosed design of the Mac disk means we don't have to worry about protective sleeves and careful handling ... The Mac packaging (artwork, Apple decals,

small toy-like size, and simple instructions that open with "the adventure begins here") really convey a sense of fun ... The Mac easily fits onto a crowded desktop ... Too bad the Imagewriter is so big and heavy. The adjustment lever for setting paper thickness is still hard to reach, just like on the older Lisa model, and the noise level is too high for a quiet office, but the great print quality and speed help make up for those deficiencies ... The Guided Tour disks and audio cassettes are fantastic. An edited version that requires no operator interaction would be a terrific demonstration tool for dealers ... After using a Lisa, it takes a while to get used to the Mac's smaller, etched, non-glare screen, but the high resolution prevents it from becoming a problem, and soon even a Lisa user finds the Mac display quite acceptable ... Finding an alarm clock among the desk accessories was a nice surprise. Alarms aren't mentioned at all in the documentation, so Apple must have included an enhanced version of the clock at the last minute ... MacPaint is especially fun to play with and learn. It's interesting discovering how a "bit map" editor like MacPaint differs from a "graphics" editor like LisaDraw. You need a

completely different frame of mind as you approach the task of creating a drawing. Until a few tricks are learned, selecting and adjusting a previously drawn object in MacPaint seems hard for experienced LisaDraw users, and in general MacPaint seems to require a bit more artistic talent from the user than LisaDraw does. Fortunately, MacPaint's amazing FatBits mode allows touch-ups at the finest level of detail, and MacDraw is supposedly coming soon, so LisaDraw lovers need not despair too long if they've been hoping to move their work to a Mac. Just keep in mind that MacPaint is more like an artist's tool while LisaDraw is more like a drafting tool ... The selection of type faces is much better on the Macintosh than on the Lisa, and being able to select just about any point size is very convenient. It's also nice having the Font Mover utility so that unwanted fonts can be moved off disk to

LisaStat uses LisaCalc and LisaGraph to illustrate statistical functions. Capabilities: linear regression, trend line projections, exponential smoothing, etc. Data are shown as bar graph, with the desired function superimposed as a line graph. \$49.95 Computer Shoppe Box 18344 Greensboro, NC 27419



free up space. Now if we could just design our own fonts ... Apparently MacPaint only prints drawings, including text, at screen resolution, while MacWrite can print the same fonts bi-directionally in "high" resolution. Pictures pasted in from MacPaint are still output at screen resolution, though. 

Received: Art Department

Business & Professional Software sent us a copy of their product for evaluation: a disk filled with a library of LisaDraw Images called Art Department.

The idea behind this product is that Instead of struggling to create decent looking images, say to enhance your newsletter or sales presentation or other LisaDraw document, you can simply open a folder on the Art Department disk, select and cut an already drawn image created by an artist, and just paste it in.

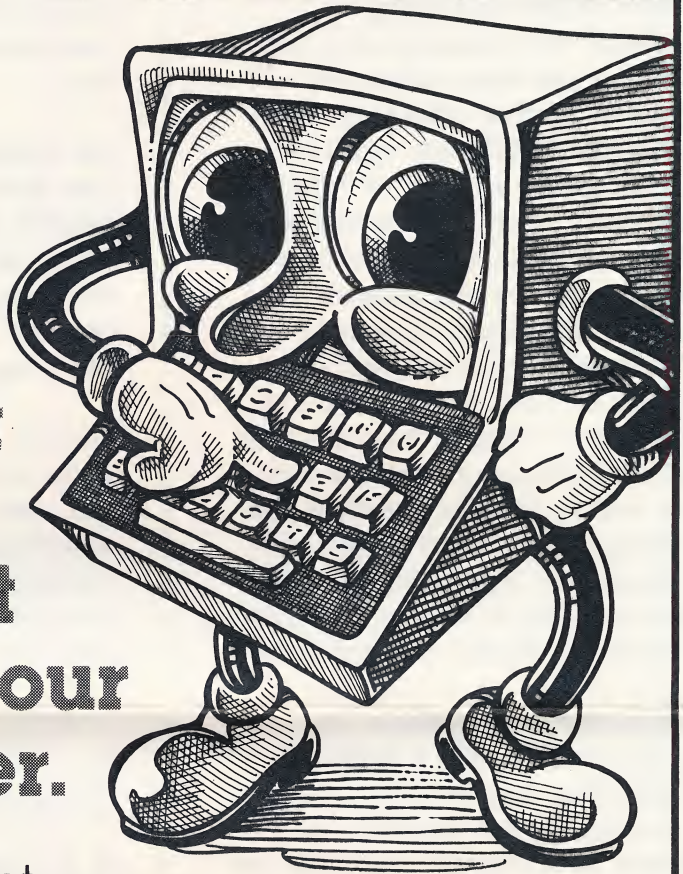
Before the product arrived, we already had preconceived notions that the \$150 price tag seemed a bit steep for a disk of clip art,

even if it does contain over 300 drawings. But once the product arrived, we used it to design an actual handout for a sales call, and we quickly became convinced that anyone trying to produce professional looking graphics with LisaDraw can easily get their money's worth using Art Department. All of the Images are of a very high quality and well designed. The selection of drawings is surprisingly thorough and offers much to choose from. Each image is carefully thought out and easily customized. For example, the receiver in the telephone drawing can be lifted from its cradle, and the front bezel on the Image of a Lisa can be switched between the old and new disk styles. We often found that the mere availability of a good drawing would cause us to think of a way to include it in our document. 


The manual that's supplied is clear and thorough, but most users will probably just jump right in and start cutting and pasting. A printed directory of all the drawings is included, prepunched for a standard Lisa binder, to help determine which folder icon contains which drawing.

On the disk itself is a business 

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forms folder containing a calendar and drawings of a check, invoice, purchase order and general purpose statement form; a folder of different types of graph paper; a folder of "graphic elements" such a fancy borders, large brackets, dashed lines and shapes, arrows and pointers, three-dimensional structures and "accents" like check marks and stars; a folder of flags and U.S. and world maps; a "media" folder of communication symbols such as a book, flipchart, podium and television; an office folder with drawings of equipment, furniture and supplies; a folder of common household objects, measurement symbols such as a ruler and stopwatch, and symbols for people and places; a folder of road signs and vehicles; a folder of large block characters; and a folder of economic, industrial and job function symbols.

The collection of fancy borders in the graphic elements folder includes only the upper left corner of borders for a page. You have to duplicate and flip the border over to form the remaining page corners. We found this much more difficult to do than it looked.

All of the maps appear very accurate, but unfortunately we

found we couldn't select individual states out of the U.S. map.

We frequently discovered that it was difficult to control the relative position of objects in an image being squeezed or enlarged, but that is really a problem with LisaDraw, not with the image library itself.

Overall, we found Art Department to be inviting, helpful, easy to use, well designed and well organized. The vendor can be reached at Box 11, Cambridge, MA 02142 or you can telephone 800-342-5277. 

This Month's Mailbag

A letter recently arrived from Vernon Brown, an engineer in Iowa who does hydraulic layouts and schematics with LisaDraw. He has created a data base of basic hydraulic symbols (valves, motors and so on) and now cuts and pastes them across windows to create working drawings. Since this technique can be used for any engineering drawing, not just hydraulic schematics, Vernon

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thought that other engineers might be interested to know that the ten to twelve hours minimum it used to take him to manually complete a drawing has been reduced to one to two hours maximum on his Lisa.

Mary McIver of Genealogical Record Search at 1207 Michigan, Elizabethton, TN 37643, is trying to find genealogy software for her Lisa, after determining that LisaList is "inadequate for storage".

A dealer sent us a copy of the first issue of *Computer Rumors*, their newsletter composed on a Lisa. Writers and publishers wishing to see one more example of a small publication produced with a Lisa might try requesting a copy from The Computer Room, 1492 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12205.

Bill Stanley of the Computer Shoppe in Greensboro, NC is investigating the possibility of attaching plotters to Lisa. If you have a similar interest or information on LisaDraw file structures or plotter drivers, please call 919-299-4843. 

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